My Baruch EOC Experience

By Nick Colandrea

Nick Colandrea, Vice President and Compliance Manager at JPMorgan, has been an Executives on Campus Mentor since 2010. Nick participates in our Academic Year-Long Mentoring Program, in the Zicklin Undergrad Honors Mentoring Program, as well as in Mentor for a Morning/Evening. Nick also sits on EOC's Advisory Committee. We asked him to share his thoughts on being an EOC Mentor and some of the advice he gives his Mentees.

I was honored to be asked to contribute to the Baruch EOC Newsletter. Before I go any further, I would like to recognize all of the hard work J. and Karolina put in. Their dedication and devotion to this cause is a major reason why this program has become a staple of the career development programming at Baruch. I would also like to thank all the donors that have contributed to the program which has enabled it to grow immensely over the last few years.

When I was first asked to be part of this program, I was not sure that I was qualified. J. assured me that I would be a good fit and now here I am three years later enjoying every minute of it. I am very glad that J.'s power of persuasion worked.

**being a mentor** At first, I must admit, I was worried that I would let my student down by not being helpful and I was fearful that I would not guide him or her in the right direction. After meeting my student, I realized that I was looking at myself and seeing an ambitious, bright and hungry student, eager to get into the work force and dive into a successful career. I realized that the world they are so eager to enter may not be what they expected. Drawing from my past, I realized when I began my career; I did not have the benefit of being able to have someone in my corner who could prepare me for the "real world". Having a professional in my field to review my resume, conduct mock interviews or just answer general questions about day-to-day procedures or maybe even having the opportunity to see an actual trading floor environment would have relieved a lot of the stress I felt as a college graduate. I am honored that I could potentially be the point of contact which could provide insight on what to expect when entering the work force. I want nothing more than for the bright students of Baruch to have every bit of a fighting chance as a student from another university.

EOC does an excellent job in paring up mentors with students; they put in the time and effort needed to create successful relationships. In the few years that I have been a part of EOC mentoring programs, I have formed great relationships with some of these students. The students are very appreciative of the advice and hungry for more knowledge. One would think that the relationship is more one-sided with the mentor providing all of the conversation but this is not so. These students have provided me with renewed energy in myself and the ability to push forward and make more changes in order to pave the way for the next generation.

**sound advice** I stress the importance of networking and meeting people in your career world. The business card you are able to obtain at a happy hour event, a cocktail party, or maybe at a friend’s event may be a contact that can further your career at some point in the future. We need to take advantage of all opportunities presented to us because they may be useful down the road.

Another thing to keep in mind is that we do not know where our career will take us. I preach having an open mind about your career path because the path travelled may end up being different from what you originally set out to do. I like to refer to a quote from The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho — “making a decision was only the beginning of things. When someone makes a decision, he is really diving into a strong current that will carry him to places he had never dreamed of when he first made the decision.” From personal experience, when I first set out to invade the financial world I wanted to be a trader but I knew no one was going to hand a fresh college grad a job on a trading desk with no credentials, no clientele and no previous trading experience. I was offered an opportunity in Operations of a financial firm and was determined to move my way up to the trading desk. As I learned the inner workings of the stock market and increased my network, the opportunities began to present themselves. I found out that there were many other areas of interest and opportunities as well. Based on market conditions I continued to increase my knowledge base and took advantage of these opportunities as they arose. This is important to understand: know where you want to be but do not pass up other related interests which may be a career growth opportunity. I weaved my way into Compliance which is where I am presently, but I could say that was not on my radar fifteen years ago.

A mentor would have been very useful early in my career. I think the Baruch EOC has created a great program and I wish it much success in the future. I am very happy to be a part of it and know that I am able to help out the great students of Baruch.”

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Nicholas Colandrea is currently Vice President and Compliance Manager at JPMorgan. He supports various sales and trading areas as well as head the Regulatory Reporting and Monitoring Surveillance group which ensures integrity of regulatory reporting. Previously, he was with Bear Stearns for 10 years in various roles. Having started in purchases and sales operations, Nick rose to a management level, during which he was responsible for reconciling various types of trades for the company and its clients. Nick is an expert in operations, middle office support, and equities compliance. Nick also spent time at Time Warner Cable in a client relationship management capacity as well as in research and collections.

Nick is a graduate of Baruch and holds a BBA in finance and investments. He also completed coursework at the New York Institute of Finance.